

The Loyal Baptist

APOLOGY

OR AN

FOR THE
BAPTIZED BELIEVERS.

BEING ALSO

An Earnest Persuasive to them and all Christians,
to study to be Quiet, and do their own Business,
in these important Particulars,

- V I Z. { I. To Honour all Men.
 { II. To Love the Brotherhood.
 { III. To Fear God.
 { IV. To Honour the King.

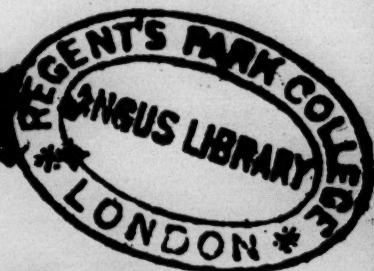
Delivered in two Sermons upon 1 Pet. 2. 17.

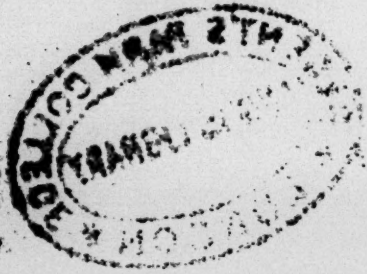
By THOMAS GRANTHAM, a Servant of Christ.

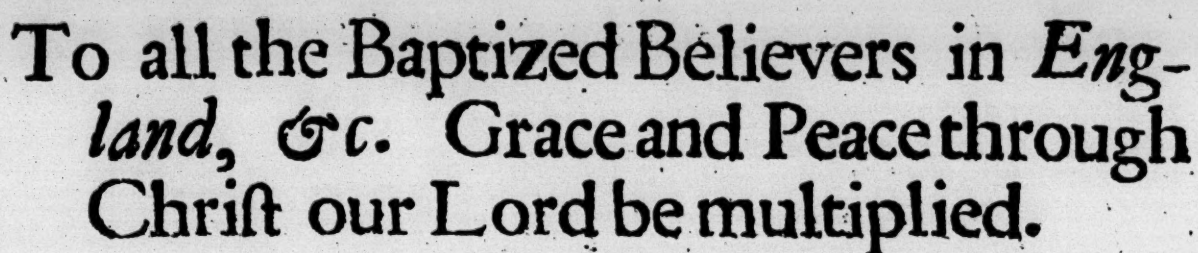
*My Son, fear thou the Lord, and the King: and meddle not with them
that are given to change. PROV. 24. 21.*

*But—whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto you
more than unto God, judg ye? ACTS 4. 19.*

London, Printed for the Author, and are to be Sold by *Tho. Fabian*
at the Bible in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1674.







And considering the manifold Temptations that attend Christians in these days upon that account, I thought it my Duty, as one that has obtained Mercy to be faithful, to do my best in giving warning to my Brethren, lest any of them should be ensnared with ill Principles, or specious Pretences, to speak or do any thing that may be inconsistent with Gospel-Rules, either in things relating more immediately to Almighty God, or to the King's Majesty, and those that are in Authority under him.

Such

Such heady Persons there were in the Apostle's Days, and therefore the less strange if now some such be found in the best of Churches, as are not afraid to speak Evil of Dignities: All Ages and sorts of Christians have been troubled with such Evil-Workers. And as it hath been the care of faithful Men all along to protest against them, that the Truth (which such Wretches only prophane by their Profession of it) might not be worse thought of because of them; So let it be our care to bear a faithful Testimony against all such in these Days.

And I beseech you Brethren, whom God hath made as Guides to the rest, that you give all diligence to teach and instruct those under your Charge, in the Duties which pertain to every state of Life; as well as in things which pertain to the Worship of our Gracious God: For these are the things which become sound Doctrine, and of these our Obedience to Magistrates is not the least. I commit the ensuing Discourses to the Consideration of all Christians, and to the Blessing of God, and remain,

Your Brother,

and Servant in the Gospel,

THO. GRANTHAM.

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Delivered in several Discourses upon 1 Pet. 2. 17.

*Honour all Men, Love the Brotherhood, Fear God,
Honour the King.*

THis great Apostle, St. Peter, having preached Christ in many Countries, thought it meet to leave some Monuments of his holy Doctrine with all the Churches. And having in two sacred Epistles assured them of the certainty of the Doctrine which he had preached, and that it was no Fable or new Device, but the very Truth which from the Beginning God made known to his Prophets : He then exhorts them to

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Stedfastness, and to hope to the end for the grace or fulness of Glory, which shall be brought to all true Christians at the revelation or second coming of Christ.

He warns them to beware of Sin, chiefly that root of Malice, Envy and Hypocrisy, (for these are usually complicated in one) : for as it gave being to all our Misery, and has been all along the ruine of Nations, Churches, and Communities; so we are advertised that it will abound towards the end of the World.

To avoid this damning Iniquity, we are willed to consider our new Birth, and as new-born Babes to evidence our delight to be in the sincere Milk of the Word of God, not in the Vanities of this World, where we are but Pilgrims and Strangers; assuring us, that as Christ is the sure Foundation to support his Church: So, (however some Builders do set him at naught) he is the Head of the Corner, and will certainly in time confound the Disobedient, 1 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

Howbeit, lest Christians should be too impatient of the seeming delay of Christ's Exaltation, and of the manifold Tribulations which in the mean time they must suffer; he further warns them to be of an obedient and submissive Spirit to such as are in Authority, and to adorn their Profession, by an honest Conversation, as the best way to silence their Opposers; *For so is the Will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish Men,* 1 Pet. 2. 15. For tho it be very true that all Christians are the Lord's Freemen, 1 Cor. 7. 22. yet they may not maliciously despise any Man, nor dishonour any Man, much less any that are in Authority: Christianity being indeed the greatest Obligation that any Man can be under, to preserve and chearfully to give to all their Dues, in respect of Love, Honour, Fear, Tribute, Custom, &c. God is to have the things which are God's, Princes the things which are theirs, and all Men (as well those that are not Christians as those that are) must have that Love and Honour which is their Due even from the Servants of Christ.

Thus then we approach the Text; which calls upon us to *Honour all Men, Love the Brotherhood, to Fear God, and to Honour the King.* In which Directions is briefly contained the whole duty of a Christian Man. As,

1. His Duty in general to Mankind, *Honour all Men.*
2. His particular Duty to the Church of God, *Love the Brotherhood.*
3. His special Duty to Almighty God, *Fear God.*
4. His Obedience to the Higher Powers, *Honour the King.*

In opening these Words, we shall consider the genuine import of them.

1. *Honour all Men.* (1.) The Word *Honour* here, according to the Greek, may be understood thus, *Esteem all Men highly, value all Men at an high Price, or count them precious*: And hence, *Tremelius* reads the place *Omnes Homines in Honore habite*, have all Men in high Esteem or Honour. And in this Direction is implied that lowly and gracious Spirit, that friendly and amicable Temper which all Christians should have and evidence towards Mankind: for he that is not of a lowly Spirit, cannot Honour all Men. (2.) By *All Men*, we must not here admit of the exception of any Man as such; but forasmuch as they are all the Off-spring of God, it is the Will of God that a due esteem be given to them all, as the most noble part of his Creation under the Sun; — *And but a little lower than the Angels*, Psal. 8.

2. *Love the Brotherhood.* By Love here we may safely understand, a more special kind of Love than that which we owe to all Men, which is well expressed, in the 2 *Epist. of John*, *Whom I love in the Truth, for the Truths sake which dwelleth in us*. Hence some of our Translators render the Words thus, *Love Brotherly Fellowship*. And the Rhemists tells us, that *This Speech often commendeth the Unity of all Christians among themselves*.

3. *Fear God.* The Original imports an awful dread, or such a Fear as causeth Trembling; and 'tis the same Word used, *Mat. 10. 28.* where it is evident such a Fear is intended: *But rather fear him which is able to destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*. By the Fear of God therefore in this place, we must understand the dutiful Observance of his revealed Will (for so the Fear of God is sometimes taken) as ever we expect to see his Face with Comfort: and here the Fear of Man is excluded, because it brings a Snare, *Prov. 29. 25.* and is a fatal prevention to the Service of God.

4. *Honour the King.* (1.) The Word τιμάτε does not barely signify Honour, or Esteem, in this place; but a magnificent or splendid kind of Honour: for so hath the Lord ordained for his Vicegerents, giving them the Title of Gods in *Pfal.* 82. 6. (2.) It is carefully to be considered what *King* is immediately meant in our Text: he could be no King of *Israel*, for the Kings of *Israel* had failed long before this Epistle was written; and tho Christ was born King of the *Jews*, yet he did not enter upon his Regality with respect to the Government of that, nor any other Nation: but plainly tells us, *His Kingdom is not of this World.* Nor did the Apostle speak of any Christian King, for as yet *None of the Princes of this World knew Christ*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. The King therefore here immediately intended was an Heathen King, the King of the *Romans*, who at that time (as Historians relate) was both of very wicked Life, and Idolatrous in his Religion, calling himself *Pontifex Maximus*, as being chief about the Worship of *Jupiter*. And yet, *S. Peter* will have him honoured even by those who had put themselves under the Yoak of Christ, their Heavenly King. And *St. Paul* expressly requires the same, *Rom.* 13. 1. Wherefore from the Text thus explained, we should learn these four things.

- I. *That Christians must by no means be of an haughty, scornful, nor wrathful Spirit towards any Man; but of an humble and gentle Behaviour, to pay the Debt of Honour to all, and to esteem them precious.*
- II. *Brotherly Fellowship, Love and Concord, are to be sought for, and maintained by all Christians, one with another, as such.*
- III. *Christians must have an awful Fear of God before their Eyes, that in Matters of Religion they may serve him only, and not provoke him by sinful Courses, nor by the Fear of Man.*
- IV. *Christians are bound by Gospel-Rules to be good Subjects to Princes, to honour their Persons, and conscienciously to obey their Authority.*

These.

These Propositions do harmonize with the Doctrine which is according to Godliness.

For the First; That Christians must by no means (as they tender their claim to the venerable Title of *Christian*, and to any part in the Kingdom of Christ) be of an haughty, scornful or wrathful Spirit against any Man, is a Doctrine needful to be proclaimed by an heavenly Herald, by the Voice of an Archangel, even to that part of the World called *Christendom*: For who can sufficiently bewail the almost utter Absence of this gracious Spirit, which abounded in the Author and first Professors of Christianity; and the undeniable Appearance of a Spirit of a quite contrary nature at this day, in all parts of the World where Christ is named? From whence come Wars and Fightings? Come they not hence, even from Pride? as it is written, *Prov. 13. 10. Only by Pride cometh Contention.* What greater Injuries, Indignities, and Dishonours can be offered by Mortals one towards another, than are amongst the several Orders professing Christianity? yea, very often by Men of the same Order, one towards another? So very far are the generality of Christians from obeying the Voice of our Text: And look how far they are gone from the Spirit of Humility and Tenderneſs, which leads all that have it to esteem Mankind very precious; ſo far they have loſt the Chriſtian Religion, as will appear in proving the firſt Proposition. To which purpoſe,

1. We ſhall give precedency to our Lord Chriſt, who perceiving an haughty Spirit peeping forth in his choſen Diſciples, even then whilſt the very Mirror of Meekneſs and Humility was before their Eyes, does ſolemnly denounce unto them, (and in them to all Chriſtians) that *except they were converted, and became as little Children, they ſhould by no means enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Luke 18. 15. And therewithal gives notice of a Wo impending or coming upon the World, from that Spirit of Pride and Ambition, in this ſo early an appearance of it, which yet notwithstanding ſeems to have over-run the Church in all Ages, to the Scandal of Religion. But would ſo ſmall a Fault in the choſen Diſciples, (as it may ſeem, in reſpect of that which is now every where to be found) ſhut Heaven againſt them, unleſs thoſe converted Souls were converted in that Caſe? Let us tremble to think of this.

Its?

It's clear from this Instance, that such as are of an haughty Mind, cannot honour all Men. They are Bladders puffed up with this Wind; break this Bladder, there is meer Emptiness. Their Goodness vanishes, when they cannot lift themselves above others. Whereas the truly gracious Soul studies how to serve God, and all Men for his sake; and thus to honour them, is the greatest Respect that any Christian can give to Men. Thus did our Lord himself honour all: *He took upon him the form of a Servant.* Phil. 2. 7. And indeed his great Design in his Life and Doctrine, was to restore Mankind to a State of Grace, and Reconciliation with God, and thereby to Amity and Concord one with another.

2. Next to our Saviour, let us hear his beloved Disciple *John*. He often speaks to the whole Church under the Title of *Little Children*; and the Metaphor is very fit for Christians, as in other respects, so chiefly in this, to put them in mind, they must in no wise be of a lofty and wrathful Spirit. He tells us, the Love of God is not in those Men, who have the Pride of Life in them, *1 John 2. 15, 16.* They cannot honour, esteem, or count all Men precious, till that Image of Christ, which standeth in Humility, be formed in them.

3. The Apostle *Paul*, *1 Cor. 10. 32, 33.* does not only teach the Brotherhood, that they must *shew all Meekness to all Men, and give no Offence to Jew nor Gentile*; but puts himself (as becomes all true Ministers of Christ) for a Patern to the Flock. *Tho* (saith he) *I be free from all Men, yet I have made my self Servant unto all, that I might gain the more. — I am made all Things to all Men, that I might by all means save some.* *1 Cor. 9. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.* How precious did he count the Jewish Nation! (tho they generally hated him) he could be content to be undone himself, rather than they should be lost. *Rom. 10. 1.* And no less concern'd for the poor Gentiles, that they also might be happy. *Rom. 15. 16.* And hitherto did tend the Scope of all his Labours, to *warn, teach, and to present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus.* *Col. 1. 28.*

4. And forasmuch as the Tongue is the ordinary Witness of the Spirit of Pride, and that whereby all Men are incident to dishonour one another, he strictly obligeth all Christians to *let their Speech be always with Grace, seasoned with Salt, that they may administer Grace to them that hear them.* *Col. 4. 6.* And he that will obey our Text, to honour all Men, must remember *that he speak evil of no Man*, (an Impiety which God knows even reigns amongst Christians.)

Christians.) *The Tongue is an unruly Member, a World of Iniquity.* And hence the Apostle James is very bold, telling us, our Religion is vain, if we bridle not that Member. *Jam. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.* How can that Tongue be fit to bless God, to profess the Christian Religion, which is exercised in cursing, speaking evil, or wishing ill to any Man? *My Brethren, these Things ought not to be. Doth a Fountain give sweet Water and bitter at the same place?* This is not to be found in Nature, nor to be expected in Grace. Christians must be known to all Men by their Fruits of Righteousness, Meekness, Goodness, and Faith; otherwise Men shall never be moved to glorify God in their behalf.

5. That Christian who will honour all Men, must love all Men; without this, he cannot esteem them, nor count them precious. Whom we love not, we have no delight to honour. It is in a manner peculiar to the Christian Doctrine, that Men should love their Enemies, pray for them that persecute them and despitefully use them. Let us therefore pay this Debt, to honour all Men in Love. He that will do this, must bear Mankind upon his Heart in Prayer and Supplication. *1 Tim. 2. 1.* This is a Lesson for Christians, as such, they must love their Neighbours as themselves, and all Men are their Neighbours. The Royal Law obliges them to it; *Jam. 2. 8. If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scriptures, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self, ye do well; but if ye have respect to Persons, (that is, love one, and hate another) ye commit Sin, and are convinced of the Law as Transgressors.* Were Christians filled more with this Fruit of the Spirit, we should see an end of these Animosities, opprobrious and abusive Epithets, or Brands of Reproach and Infamy, which are daily cast upon Men, and too frequently found among Christian Men. It is to be lamented, that Men who are precious in the esteem of God, should not be esteemed so by one another.

But *honour all Men*, says our Text; and the Arguments to enforce the Duty are many, of which, some we will urge in this place, and the first shall be this:

First; They are Men as well as our selves, our Equals by Creation, the Workmanship of the Hands of the same God; and therefore are we bound to honour all Men, as Men; nor can we slight, despise; or dishonour them, but we dishonour our selves:

For

For they are Flesh of our Flesh, and *God hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, to dwell upon the Face of the Earth*; and he is the *God of the Spirits of all Flesh*. And thus we have all one Father; as one God hath created us, *we are all his Off-spring*: not as some prophanely have said, that Man is no more God's Off-spring than an Hog; for he did not consult the Creation of any thing, as he did the Creation of Man, *Gen. 2*. Nor did he breath into the Nostrils of Hogs, the same Spirit of Life and Wisdom which he breathed into Man. *David* admires the Goodness of God in the dignified State of Man, *Psal. 8. 4, 5*. And let us beware of base thoughts concerning Man, lest we value him no more than the Beasts of the Field, and so dishonour him, whom God created in great Honour, and to this day (notwithstanding his Fall) hath set him over the Works of his Hands. All Men are our Brethren, let us honour them as such; for what Brotherhood soever we attain, yet our humane Fraternity is antecedent, and not made void by any *Post-Fraternity*, which is good, but rather more endeared. This was seen in *St. Paul*, the nearer his Relation was to God upon the account of Christianity, the more was his Love, and the greater his Sorrow for his Brethren according to the Flesh, *Rom. 9. 2*. Let not Christians think, that their Relation, nor Obligation of Nature to Mankind, is destroyed or made less, by their being Christians; such a vain Conceit will alienate us from our own Flesh, and make us quite pervert the Text, which puts us in mind that our Religion does strongly engage us to honour them all. It was a Vertue in the *Philosopher*, who would not be accounted of this or that Nation, Tribe, or City, but entitled himself a *Citizen of the whole World*; meaning, he had an equal respect for Mankind; and if his Relation might be an Honour, he would be related to them all, that he might honour them all.

Secondly; Christians must honour all Men, because God himself hath honoured them-all, setting his Love upon them, and manifesting it to them, and that divers ways: As,

1. In the common Acts of his Providence, of which we have an excellent Account in the *107th Psalm*, to which I refer you. It is he that giveth them fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Joy and Gladness; he gives them Life and Breath, and all things. Hence they (even all Nations) are called his People, and the *Sheep of his Pasture*, *Psal. 100. 1, 2*. and upon this very ground
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are required to pay their Debt of Thankfulness unto him.

2. God has greatly honoured Mankind in the gracious Act of Redemption ; I say, in this he has greatly *esteemed all Men, and counted them very precious.* That God hath done this for *all Men*, nothing can be more plain than these Testimonies : *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, who gave himself a Ransom for all.* 1 Tim. 2. 6. *We see Jesus made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death.* — *That he by the Grace of God should taste Death for every Man.* Heb. 2. 9. *For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God, being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus.* Rom. 3. 23, 24. *He is a Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.* Surely he that against the Light of these plain Testimonies, can or will think that God neglected the greatest part, or any part of Mankind, in the most important Business of Redemption, must needs have a very low esteem and dishonourable thoughts of that part of Mankind, cannot value them much above the fallen Angels or Devils, for whom no Ransom was given ; and consequently they cannot *honour all Men.* The Devils are but Sinners, shut up to the Judgment of Eternal Fire, without means of Recovery; and these Men, that narrow up the Redemption of Man to the Elect only, shut up the remainder of Men in that Condemnation which is inevitable. And what Honour can belong to such ? How should we count them precious, if indeed God hated them from all Eternity ? It is not saying, *That we know them not by Name, and therefore ought to honour all Men*, that will salve the Business : For the truth is, if we heartily honour all Men, we must be *sure* that God would have us do so ; and of this we cannot be sure, if we think God made them only to damn them : For if the Esteem or Honour which we give to all Men, proceed not from sincere Love to them, and Desire of their Happiness, it is but Hypocrisy, no true Honour ; for the Honour which we owe to all Men, is not founded upon any thing wherein they are dignified above us, but upon those Blessings or Favours from God, which are common to us all, and wherein he has made no difference between one and another. And therefore if we truly esteem, love, and wish all Men well in the Case of their Salvation, we must believe that God does so too, or else we cannot do it heartily. *Augustine's* Speech here is worthy of Remembrance ; *O vehement Love ! that God for Man's cause can vouchsafe to become*

Man! Who can hate Man, whose Nature and Likeness he beholds in the Humanity of God? Surely, if God has not loved all Men in Christ, we have no cause to count them precious, because we see them not favoured in the Humanity of God.

3. That our God counts *all Men* precious, may be seen in the Order given, that the Word of Peace or Reconciliation may be preached to *all Men*, or, to every Creature; to be *made known to all Nations. for the Obedience of Faith.* Mat. 28. 19. Rom. 16. 26. Surely this Message, with the Messenger and Messengers that brought it to *all Men*, does stupendously evidence, how precious God accounts all Men. He may justly demand, What could have been done to evidence my Love to Man, and the precious Esteem I have of him, which I have not done. Has he not sent his Apostles, whose Words have gone to the *uttermost parts of the Earth?* Rom. 10. Yea, he hath sent his Son, whom he hath made Heir of all Things; yea, he hath sent thus to those that would not accept these Tokens of Love, Estimation, or Honour. *John* 1. 11. *Mat.* 21. 38. Surely it is an Act of Honour towards the Party visited, when the King comes to visit the Beggar, yea, the Traytor. *Whence is this to me,* said *Elizabeth*, *that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* And whence is this to Man, or what Honour hath God conferred upon Man, that our Lord himself should come to Man, to redeem him by the Death of the Cross, and to make all Men see what is the Fellowship of this mysterious Piece of Godliness, (*which is God manifest in the Flesh, &c.*) by the Light of the Gospel?

Thirdly; *Christians must honour all Men, because this is one effectual way to recommend the Way of Christianity, or the Truth which we profess, to the acceptance of all Men.* And hitherto may be referred these and the like Rules; *Walk in Wisdom towards them that are without. If you salute your Brethren only, what do you more than others? The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all Men. Render to no Man Evil for Evil, but overcome Evil with Good. Shewing all Meekness to all Men. Giving a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear.* That Christian that shall walk towards all Men according to these Rules, shall certainly honour all Men, and greatly recommend the Truth to them all; for thus shall he himself become an Epistle of Christ, *read and known of all Men.* 1 Cor. 3. 2.

I shall conclude this first Doctrine with a solemn Protestation against all such as would set up their Religion by Violence, Blood, and Treachery, by what Name soever distinguished; for if this be their Scope, they have not known Christ, nor the Divine Power of Christianity. *Cain* leads the Van to this unreasonable Troop, who never did nor can *honour all Men*, till they be delivered from this Principle: No, they desire to kill, that they only might be honoured. By this unchristian sort of Christians, what unspeakable Butcheries have been committed! Hundreds of Thousands in a neighbouring Nation, in this Age, cruelly destroyed. What Hangings, Burnings, and Tormentings all *Europe* over! And this pretendedly to advance Holy Church! As if our Saviour's House must be built with Blood, when yet he plainly tells us, he came not to kill Men, but to save them, and sharply rebukes his Disciples, when such a Spirit appeared in them.

And have we not seen a refined Generation, (as they would be thought) peeping forth, with the Name of Blood, or the *smiting Principle*, written on their Forehead, with direction to their Profelites to pray, that God would destroy all Oppression and *Oppressors* from off the face of the Earth? Lord! what is this? The greatest part of Mankind peradventure are Oppressors in one thing or other; and must a Christian pray for their Destruction, or for their Conversion? Sure the latter is the Duty of all Christians. *1 Tim. 2. 1, 2.* They cannot desire such a woful Day, but that Mercy may be extended, knowing that themselves were *sometimes foolish, disobedient, living in Malice, hateful, and hating one another.* *Tit. 3.* But alas! do not these Men pray for their own Destruction? Who sees not that such a Principle is pregnant with Oppression? O let all Christians beware of it. And let us pray for them that hate us, persecute us, and speak all manner of Evil against us falsely, for his Names sake, who hath called us not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake.

Thus leaving all Men of bloody, violent, and treacherous Principles, to consider what Spirit they are of; how unlike our Lord Christ; how different from the Primitive Christians; how contrary to Humanity it self, which teaches all to do to others (not as they do) but as we would they should do to us: We shall

proceed to the next Point of Doctrine, grounded upon the second Direction in the Text, *Love the Brotherhood.*

Doct. II. *Brotherly Fellowship, Love and Unity is carefully to be endeavoured and maintained by all Christians.*

This Brotherhood being not natural, but spiritual and mystical, admits of a twofold Consideration :

1. In the largest Sence the Word (and Use of it in Scripture) will bear.
2. In a more strict and special Sence.

In the first, we must comprehend all that own the holy Scriptures for the Rule of Faith, believing in the only true God, the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost, (*for these three are one*) ; that Christ died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification ; that live soberly, according to the general Rules of Christianity, tho they may be diversly persuaded in the Methods of Christian Worship. Or I could be content, (if the State of Christianity would bear it in these Days) to express my self in this Case in the Words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1. 2. *All that in every place call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ* ; among whom he found Diversities of Opinions, as well as Disorders in practice of Ordinances. Not that he allows either, but labours to reform both, yet so as he would preserve Amity among them as they were Brethren, tho some of them were carnal, 1 Cor. 3. others allowing themselves a very dangerous Liberty in religious Matters, even to eat Things sacrificed to Idols ; some doubting of the Resurrection, others very loose in their Devotion at the Lord's Table ; they were some tumultuous, others otherwise vicious, 2 Cor. 13. Now whether the Apostle, in his Exhortations to Unity, intends, that notwithstanding these Errors they should hold ample Communion with the Erroneous ; or whether, upon adhering to Reproof by him given, and their obeying the Epistles which he sent to them, he obliges them to maintain and uphold their Communion, is the Business to be considered.

The first it is not like to be, for then few Errors, either in Doctrine or Life, could break this brotherly Fellowship among Christians. And then to what purpose are these Rules given? *Mark them.*

them which cause Divisions and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. Rom. 16. 17. Withdraw your selves from every Brother which walks disorderly, &c. 2 Thess. 3. 6. Surely all that can be required, as to Unity with these Christians, is a brotherly Compassion, to encourage what we can the Truth they hold, or the Good they do; to hold with them in the common Cause of Christianity, against the common Enemy of it. I conceive the latter to be the only safe way, viz. That notwithstanding their great Carnality, Weakness of Judgment, or Forwardness in their erroneous Opinions, &c. if now they would receive the Counsel of the Lord's Messenger, or which the Lord by his Messenger had sent unto them, that then the Brotherhood once found among them should still continue, tho they had too evidently forfeited their Privileges. Thus to take the Apostle's meaning, is to make him harmonize with himself. 2 Thess. 3. 14. *If any Man obey not our Word by this Epistle, note that Man, and have no Company with him, that he may be ashamed; yet count him not an Enemy, but admonish him as a Brother.* But to take the Apostle in the first Sence, would make him irreconcilable to or with himself. So then, Paul did not advise the Faithful at Corinth, to hold ample Communion with those of ill Life, and erroneous Principles in the necessary parts of Religion, such as the Resurrection, and Separation from Idolatry doubtless are; for he that denies the first, denies Christ to be risen, makes the Apostles false Witnesses, and the Faith of Christians vain. 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2, 3. And the second makes Men incapable to serve God: *Ye cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Idols (or Devils.)* 1 Cor. 1. 10.

Let us then consider the second, or more strict Sence of the Word, *Brotherhood*, in our Text. And here we must take it, as it pertains to truly constituted and well-governed Societies of Christians: For undoubtedly God intended to have the Christian Religion stated and maintained in all Nations, according to the pristine Simplicity of the Gospel, without the mixtures of Legal Ceremonies, or humane Innovations: For when Jesus gave commission to his Apostles, to teach all Nations, baptizing them; and then, to teach them to observe all Things whatsoever he commanded them. Mat. 28. 19, 20. and gave being to this Order, to continue to the end of the World, it must needs be highly rational on the part of all such, as do piously stand to this Form of Doctrine, as
expli-

explicated and delivered to the Churches, *Rom. 6. 17. Heb. 6. 1, 2.* And consequently it must needs be very pleasing to God, and commendable in the Church, that his Institutes be kept with the greatest exactness, *as they were delivered at first, 1 Cor. 11. 2.*

For if once Variations in either the Doctrinal or Practical Parts of the Christian Religion be admitted, there can be no certain duration of any Truth. *A little Leaven leaveneth the whole Lump, Gal. 5. 7.* And this the Apostle speaks too, with relation to the Imposition of some Legal Rites, which once had a Divine Original and Use in the Church of God, and yet now could not consist with obedience to the Truth. *Gal. 5. 7. Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that you should not obey the Truth?* Hence Saint Paul would not give place to St. Peter himself, (when too much symbolizing with legal Ceremonies, *Gal. 2.*) that so the Truth of the Gospel might continue in the Churches of *Galatia*; plainly shewing, that as Light and Darkness cannot dwell together, so the Gospel is exclusive of legal Ceremonies and humane Innovations. And seeing all must grant, there has been a very great departure from the Truth of the Gospel, both in Doctrine and Practice, there cannot be a better Method (I suppose) thought on, to amend what is amiss in the Christian World, (*and thereby to restore true brotherly Fellowship*) than that used by our Lord, *Mat. 19. 8.* to reform a Corruption among the Jews, and such an Error too as had a shew of Scripture-Authority for it, (I mean the Case of *Divorce*) yet our Saviour suppresseth that Custom, by referring to the primitive Institution of Marriage; *From the Beginning it was not so.*

And upon this Text, how well does our Brethren (I mean the Sober and Pious in the Church of *England*) defend themselves against Popish Innovations, both in Opinion and Practice? One of them speaks thus: As touching *each of these Errors*, we can say with our Saviour, in this present Correction of the Pharisees, that *from the Beginning it was not so*; and we care not whence they come, unless they come from the Beginning. This hath ever been (saith he) the Rule, the warrantable Rule to reform a Church. When *Esdras* was intent on building the Temple, he sent not to *Ephesus*, much less to *Rome*; he did not enquire into the Rituals of *Numa Pompilius*; but had recourse for a Temple, to that of *Solomon*; and for a Rite, to that of *Moses*. Indeed for Things meerly indifferent, (as he observes) there must be pre-
served

served a Liberty in all Churches to consult and do for the best. I dare not say as he, *To make Constitutions*; (for that's a great word) but to manage her Affairs with Decency, Order, and Charity.

But to come more directly to our Doctrine, which is, *Brotherly Fellowship*; *Love and Unity is carefully to be endeavoured and maintained by all Christians.*

Certain it is that our Love, as Christians, may go much further than our actual Communion in all things Christian, may do; and yet this Love it self is a kind of Fellowship. The Angels have Fellowship with us, and acknowledg themselves our *Fellow Servants*, *Rev. 19. 10.* and yet they do not partake with us in all our acts of Religion, but only by approbation and corroboration, in things which are well done. Now the best or most orderly sort of Christians cannot conceive a greater disproportion between their Churches, and the Churches of the most erring (if but well-meaning) Societies that conscientiously profess Love and Obedience to Christ: And even hence, we are obliged to hold as much Brotherly Fellowship with them, as we can, especially that of Love and Brotherly Compassion. For when we consider, that even some of all sorts of Christians will rather dye, than basely deny their Lord and Master, we cannot but have Fellowship with such in our Spirits, whilst it is the same (and not a feigned Christ) to whom they shew their utmost testimony of Love.

And this Consideration alone, may suffice to take away that imbitteredness, which is too often found among Christians dissenting one from another: Let their Appellations be what they will, so that they believe in the true Christ, and live well, being also faithful to what they know. And tho they be never so angry with me for opposing them in their Traditions, or erring Notions otherwise, yet I must have a Brotherly tenderness towards them all for the Truths sake which dwelleth in them. But now, for ample or full Communion, I see not how that can be attained and maintained, but where there is antecedent to it, an Union both in Doctrine and Practice, in things necessary to the true Constitution and Government of the Church of Christ. And seeing also our Differences about these things are not small, or trivial; it cannot (I think) be better ordered, than that a Friendly Distinction, and Brotherly Forbearance be permitted as to ample Communion; for that

that Men cannot comfortably nor peaceably join together till they be agreed in these things.

I see not that the difference betwixt *Paul* and *Barnabas* was so great (as to the thing about which they differed) as the things about which Christians differ in these days; and yet its certain their Contention being great (for *παροξυσμός* signifies *provoking, gauling, and imbittered Speeches, and Minds*, say the Learned) it is certain they could not transact their Affairs in the Gospel together, but apart. And this was written perhaps to shew, that a competent Unity in Judgment must precede our actual Communion, and till that be attained among us, there is a necessity (in regard, partly of human Frailty, and partly in regard of some precious Truths) to forbear one another, without destroying the Truth to which we have attained respectively.

And this is the greatest Love we can extend to one another, under these difficult Circumstances.

1. To pity and heartily to pray one for another; for the Servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle towards all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.

2. There must be all Patience exercised, and Compassion shewed to the Ignorant, and those that are out of the way, especially where the scruple is tender and conscientious. And in the mean time, the faithful Minister of God must *hold fast the form of sound Words*, he must teach the *same Doctrine which was committed to his Trust by the Apostles*. He must warn others that they teach no other *Doctrine*. He must *not give place to Jewish, or other Fables*. And the Church must so walk in Christ, *as they first received him*, rooted in the Foundation-Principles, established and built up in him: *Not carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, but *speaking the Truth in Love, must endeavour to grow up into Christ in all things*. In a word, it is the Duty of this Brotherhood to stick close to the *whole Counsel of God*, and not to *partake with other Mens Sins, or Errors in Life or Religion*; which cannot be done, where contrarieties in Doctrine and Practice about things necessary to the true State and Government of the Church of Christ, are allowed in the same Fellowship or Community.

Love the Brotherhood. This Fraternity are in a special manner to love one another.

1. Be-

1. Because God himself hath loved them with a special kind of Love: *And if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1 John 3.* It is happy when the Love of Christians is founded upon this bottom, viz. the Manifestation of God's Love to them, and not upon any thing of human Excellency; for this is to have *Mens Persons in Admiration*, and not to admire this, *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us!*

2. Because this is the sweetest Manifestation, that we are the Children of God; for in this is manifest the Children of God, 1 John 3. 10. namely, that they love their Brethren: *And every one that loveth, is born of God.* And our Saviour makes it the true Character of Christianity: *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another, Joh. 13. 35.*

3. Because this is the uniting Grace among Christians, this makes their Society sweet, their Fellowship desirable, its a *Fellowship of Love, Phil. 2. 1.* This makes them like *David and Jonathan*, they are bound in one Girdle, and their Love was wonderful.

4. Because this makes the Sufferings of Christians easy; when those that suffer love them, in defence of whose Faith they do suffer; and see themselves beloved of their Brethren, even then when all Men seem to hate them. This made *Paul* himself rejoice in his Sufferings, *Phil. 4. 10, 14. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again, — Ye have well done that ye have communicated with me in my Affliction.*

Let us touch the things briefly, which may be sure Evidences of this Brotherly Love.

1. If then we love the Brotherhood, we are much concern'd about them in our Thoughts. For what is the Object of a Man's Love, is the Subject of his Meditation. All true Lovers know this by Experience; and let the Love of the Brotherhood exceed our Love in other cases. An instance of this Love we have in *St. Paul*, *Col. 2. 1, 2. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them of Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my Face in the Flesh: That their Hearts might be comforted, being knit together in Love, &c.*

2. If we love our Brethren, we bear them much upon our Heart in our Prayers; we cannot forget them if we rightly love them. *Paul* made mention of him in every Prayer of his whom he dearly loved, *2 Tim. 1. 3.* Let all Christian Brethren do so too, for we cannot

do less for any of them, or for many of them we can do no more.

3. If we love the Brotherhood, we will esteem them highly, according to the Vertues which we see in them, 2 *John* v. 1, 2, 3. And whom we love we will commend, and advance as much as we can, because it's the native Property of Love to do so; as appears in the interchanges of Love in the Song of *Solomon*, between Christ and his Church: and is the way too, to encrease Love, as all Experience shews.

4. If we love our Brethren, we will to our best defend their Reputation against those that injure them. Thus *Paul* vindicated not himself only, but those faithful Ministers which were with him, when some reported of them that they *walked after the Flesh*, and said, *Let us do Evil that good may come*; whose Damnation, for such vile Reproaches against the Servants of Christ, *he avers to be just*.

5. If we love the Brotherhood, we will to our Power relieve their Necessities. For *He that hath this Worlds Good, and sees his Brother want, and shutteth up the Bowels of his Compassion, how dwells the Love of God in him?* And saith another Apostle, *If a Brother or Sister be destitute of daily Food, and ye say, Be ye filled, and give them not those things that are necessary, what doth it profit?* Wherefore let Love be without Dissimulation. Let it be fervent. For to this end were our Souls purified in obeying the Truth through the Spirit, even unto unfeigned Love of the Brethren, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22.

6. The last Evidence. If we love the Brotherhood, we will seek and preserve as much as we can, the Peace of the whole, and the Prosperity of every part. *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem* (saith *David*) *they shall prosper that love thee; for my Brethren and Companions sake I will now say, Peace be within thy Walls, and Prosperity within thy Palaces.* How greatly does the true Son of *David*, our Lord Jesus, pray for this Blessing upon the whole Church, *That they all may be one, as he and his Father are one?* And what Christian will not tremble to think of doing any thing against the tenour of his blessed Prayer?

I will conclude this point with a solemn Protestation against those Evils which chiefly hinder the love of the Brotherhood; and the first is Pride.

1. *Only through Pride cometh Contention* (saith the Spirit); when Men are admirers of themselves, Proud, Boasters; they soon become despisers of those that are good, and Enemies to the Love of the Brotherhood. *Diotrephes* being got to this point, presently makes havock of the Church, by casting the Brethren out of the Church that shewed their brotherly Love to the travelling Ministers. And why? because he loved to have the Preheminence, in-
somuch as he spared not to undervalue the Apostle himself. *A proud Professor cannot love the Brotherhood.*

2. As all proud Men are Enemies to brotherly Love; so most of all such as take themselves to be infallible about things most disputable, being vainly confident that God is opposed when their Impositions are not obeyed. These Men commonly drive furiously, rend and tear, if their Mandates meet with dislike or non-reception. These Men will ever stand strenuously upon Niceties, and make things which are doubtful, and meerly indifferent, to become necessary.

3. Those who make Gain their Godliness, are great Enemies to Brotherly Love, these are called *greedy Dogs* by the Prophet, *greedy Wolves* by the Apostle; these seek their own, not the things of Christ. They are Enemies to him; their God is their Belly, they mind earthly things; they change with every Wind for Preferment. They are Lovers of their own selves. They teach things which they ought not, for filthy Lucre's sake. They love not the Brotherhood, but their Money.

Thus much to the second Point. We come now to the third part of our Text.

Fear God.

Hence the Doctrine has been propounded thus.

Doct. III. *Christians must have an awful Fear of God before their Eyes, that in Matters of Religion they may serve him only, and not provoke him by sinful Courses, nor by the Fear of Man.*

To come rightly to the performance of this Duty, we must endeavour to have a right knowledg or Belief of this God whom we

are to fear, for this our Saviour makes to be the *weighty* part of our Religion, *Faith, and the Fear of God*. Now in this Faith, which antecedes the Fear, Worship, and Service of God, we must consider the Essence and Attributes of God. In the first, he is infinitely beyond the reach of our knowledg, or finding out unto Perfection. Job 4. 24. *It is but a small portion that we know (or can know) of him in this World.*

Faith therefore satisfies it self, with knowing that
Psal. 90. 2. God is : or, that there is one God. That he is a Spirit
Rev. 4. 10. Eternal, Pure, Omnipotent, Immutable, Invisible,
1 Tim. 1. 17. Merciful, Faithful, Holy, Just and Good ; and that
Psal. 147. 5. he is infinitely and perfectly so, and whatsoever else
Prov. 15. 3. may be said to represent him Great and Glorious;

Great in his Sovereignty and Dominion, Glorious in his doings towards the Children of Men. In a Word, *Faith* apprehends or believes this God to be, whatsoever his Word declares him to be, which together with his works of Creation and Providence are the Intelligencers to Mortals, his good Spirit also helping and illuminating all that heartily seek after him. Howbeit this Faith is not of the same magnitude in all that have it, but 'tis of the same Nature, — *To all that have obtained like precious Faith with us, through the Righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 1. 1.*

To fear God, is indeed a Duty incumbent upon all Men, and not upon Christians only. And for the better performance of this great Duty, it is good to know the Cause, why Mankind of all other Creatures is bound to fear God ; I say, Mankind only, of all sublunary Creatures : for from other Creatures God expects not this, nor do they pay it to him, not having capacity, and so no necessity on them to do it. But they are subjugated to the Fear of Man, who is placed over them as Supream, *Psal. 86. 7, 8. Gen. 9. 2.* Indeed I do not find that this Fear and Dread of Man, was upon the Creature below him, till after the Earth was accursed. It is true a Dominion was given Man over them in his innocent Estate, *Gen. 1. 28.* But that he should have ruled them with Rigour, as now, I find not, but do conceive that the terrour of Man to the brute Creatures, and their Disobedience to him, are Effects of the Curse; and its certain the Curse was the Effect of Sin. But in these things let us not be too curious.

Now

Now whether in case Man had not sinned, he should have been obliged to fear God as now, or whether he should have properly feared God at all, may be enquired here? To which it may be answered, That seeing God had endued Man with excellent Reason and Judgment, and yet put him in a mutable State, and gave him notice that his state was such, when he gave him a Law with a Penalty upon the Breach of it. In the Breach of which *he should surely dye, Gen. 2. 17.* It follows that Man was even then bound to Fear, and to stand in awe of his Majesty from the beginning before Sin was upon him. So that Sin is not the Original Cause of the Fear of God, but his Bounty towards Man, and absolute Sovereignty over him, are the Grounds of it. And hence we may learn, how just, how necessary it is for us who are of the fall'n race of *Adam*, not only for that we are under these Original Obligations, and for that the Covenant which we are under as Christians, tho' a Covenant of Grace, yet is truly conditional (whatever some murmur to the contrary) to fear the God of Heaven, and to stand in awe of his Majesty. *Behold therefore the Goodness and Severity of God! on them that fell, Severity; but towards thee Goodness, if thou continue in his Goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off.* Rom. 11. 22. Heb. 4. 1. But it is furthermore our Duty, for that we are more subject to err than *Adam* was, for all grant he had Free-will, and Sufficiency of Ability to stand had he used it. But tho' some of us do hold we have a liberty of Will, yet we must all confess our Power to be very small, without intervening Grace, either to resist Temptations, or to do acts of Righteousness. *Not that we are sufficient to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God,* 2 Cor. 3. 5.

There is a Distinction of Fear towards God much spoken of, to wit, a servile Fear, and a filial Fear. The first they would exclude from a Christian. But if by servile Fear be intended no more than to fear God, as a good Servant is to fear his Master, I can see no reason to exclude it: *If I be a Master, where is my Fear? saith the Lord Mal. 1. 16.* It seems God's Servants must fear him. But perhaps the meaning of the distinction is this: *By filial Fear is meant an holy Dread, lest we do any thing that is evil, or leave undone the thing that is good; and by servile Fear, is meant a Fear of Punishment only.* If this be it, I shall say little to it, believing, whoever makes this distinction, would have all Men, and specially Christians, to fear God so as to depart from all Evil, and to do Good.

Good, lest Judgment be the Portion of their Cup from the Lord.

Fear God; that is, stand in awe of his Majesty, worship and serve him, and him only. *1 Sam. 12. 14. Only fear the Lord, and serve him with all your Heart. Psal. 45. 11. He is thy Lord, and worship thou him. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Mat. 4. 10.* This is God's Right, we must only pay it to him. When *Peter* was put upon this Strait, whether to please or fear Men, when his Service to God was the matter in question, his Speech was very frank and resolute, *Acts 4. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God, to hearken unto Men more than unto God, judg ye.* This then must ever become good Christians in matters of Religion, to stick close to that which is right in the sight of God, however it may be countermanded by Man. The Condescensions of holy *Paul* were so wisely attempered, as even then when he was made all things to all Men, and paying his debt of Love to the Wise and Unwise, so as to be without Law to them that were without Law, and under the Law to them that were under the Law; yet *he was not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ*; he would not sin to please any, nor do Evil that Good might come: *For the Fear of the Lord is clean, the Beginning of Wisdom*, and that which must keep us company all our days; else we lie open to the fiery Darts of Satan, which will both hit and hurt, where the Fear of the Lord is absent. *Therefore blessed is the Man that feareth always.* This is that Grace which held *Joseph* back from Uncleanness, *Nehemiah* from Self-endedness in God's Service, when others made it burthensom: *This did not I, saith he, because of the Fear of the Lord.*

Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, saith the Apostle. *I trembled in my self, that I might rest in the Day of Trouble*, saith the Prophet. *I exceedingly fear and quake*, said *Moses*. *I am so troubled I cannot speak*, said *David*. And shall we not exceedingly fear, and stand in awe of that Majesty, which made these Pillars in the Church to tremble? Beware of a stupid and careless Spirit, for that will soon prove a revolting Spirit. *Jer. 5. 22, 23. David makes that awful Fear of God an expresse Duty to all; Psal. 76. 7. Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who may stand in thy presence, when once thou art angry? Without a godly Fear no Service to God is acceptable. Heb. 12. And he is therefore greatly to be feared in the Assembly of the Saints.*

Thus

Thus much in general. We shall now endeavour to describe the Man that walks in the Fear of God, in a few Particulars. And,

1. He that truly fears God, worships and serves him, *must be delivered from the Fear of Man.* When *David* is considering how to fear or serve God aright, *Psal. 119. 45.* he tells us, he will *walk at Liberty*; he will have his Heart free from that which hinders due Obedience to God. And as to Matters of Religion, Christians are *Christ's Freemen.* And therefore our Saviour (who was the most faithful to *Cesar* that ever Man was) in this Case absolutely prohibits the Fear of Man; *Fear not him that can kill the Body.* And it is certain, the *Fear of Man brings a Snare*, as appears in the Case of the Pharisees: They could not confess Christ, tho they believed in him, *for they feared to be put out of their Synagogues; they loved the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God.* He that thus fears Man, cannot fear God. Let us hear the Apostle *Paul*, he is plain; *Do I now persuade Men, or God? (that is, do I preach the Doctrine of God or Man?) if I yet pleased Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ.* We see here the Difference between a faithful Christian and Minister of Christ, and those that serve the Times: The latter always preach something that is of Man, lest they should suffer Persecution for the Cross of Christ; the former fears neither Men nor Angels, so as to give consent to another Gospel, or any thing which perverts the Gospel of Christ. *Gal. 1. 4 to 11.*

2. He that truly fears God, *will give to God the Things which are God's.* This Rule, of all others, should be observed by Christians, because it proceeds from Christ himself, upon such a special occasion, *Mat. 22. 21.* as wherein the Right of Kings, and God's Right over Men are enquired into, and the Case determined by the Lord Christ, to the silencing his captious Adversaries. *Cesar's* Right must be given, and God's Right must not be withheld. Earthly Things, or our Obedience in Civil Cases, is here stated upon *Cesar*; there is therefore a necessity, that Obedience in Religious Cases be due to God, or else he has nothing peculiar in or over us. Sith therefore God Almighty has reserved all religious Obedience to himself, and that we must every Man *give an Account of himself unto God*, *2 Cor. 5.* Let all that fear God, give to him in religious Performances, the Things which have his Image and
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Superscription upon them, lest he reject both the Offering, and the Offerer, with, *Who hath required this at your hands?* Did not God provide by his express Law, that his Sacrifices should not be changed at Man's Will, a good for a bad, nor a bad for a good? Lev. 27. 10. Does not *Isaiah* cry out against them that presumed to change God's Ordinances, as Breakers of the everlasting Covenant? Isa. 24. 5. It fared very ill with *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for offering that Fire which God commanded not. Levit. 10. 1, &c. The *Corinthians* were smote with Sickness and Death, for prophaning the Lord's Table with their own Supper, 1 Cor. 11. 22, 30. *David* himself was afraid of God, when he altered the manner of carrying the Ark of God, 1 Chron. 13. And this Instance made him afterwards give to God the Things that were God's, namely, to serve him in due Order, 1 Chron. 15. Let the Use of all be, to provoke us to serve God with godly Fear, to stand in awe of his Word, to serve him with all possible exactness, according to the very Rules therein contained, that we may have the Commendation of good and faithful Servants; as it was in the Case of *Noah*, Gen. 6. 22. Thus did *Noah*, according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

3. He that truly fears God, will ever preserve a good Conscience towards God. But this can never be, where the inner Man is not pure, and the Heart delighted with the Service of God. Of some we read, that they profess high, but their Minds and Consciences are defiled, Tit. 1. 16. Others that so walked before the Lord, as to gain this Reputation, that they did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect Heart. 2 Chr. 25. 2. Now God is he that perfectly knows the Heart, and searches the Heart, and takes pleasure in Uprightness; and he knows, and will make all Men know, that as the wilful Neglect of Duties, I mean religious Duties, are an Evidence of an evil Conscience; so the keeping back part, or serving God deceitfully, or serving God under a colour, without Conscience of the Service, are the same, and shall, with the Persons so worshipping him, be rejected, as those that do not fear God. For it shall come to pass in the Day of the Lord's Sacrifice, that he will punish them that swear by the Lord, and that swear by *Malcham*; and them that are turned back from the Lord, and them that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired after him. Zeph. 1. 5, 6.

4. He that feareth God, will not resist the Power of Princes; yet will he do what God commands, tho all the Princes in the World forbid him;

him; nor will he do what God forbids, tho all the Princes in the World should command it.

What our Christian Obligations to Princes are, I hope to shew, in handling the next Direction in our Text. We are here only to shew, that no worldly Power can make void what God commands, nor make that lawful which God's Word forbids. The God of Heaven forbids worshipping or bowing down to Images or Idols, *Exod. 20.* *Nebuchadnezzar* commands the contrary, *Dan. 3. 4, 5.* under pain of suffering the fiery Furnace. Now this was a mighty Prince, to whom God had given a Kingdom, and great Glory; yet *Shadrach* and his Companions would not do his Command, but told him plainly, *They would not serve his Gods, nor worship the Golden Image which he had set up. Dan. 3. 18.* It has been the Unhappiness of Earthly Gods, to countermand the Commands of the God of Heaven, without which there would have been but few Martyrs: But the greatness of their Multitude shews the certainty of this Truth, That God's Will must be obeyed, what Troubles soever attend us from the Princes of this World for so doing. Indeed I find this Doctrine owned by most. For the Papists themselves, upon *Acts 4. 19.* say thus: 'If any Magistrate command against God, that is to say, forbid Catholick Christian Men to preach, or serve God, this same must be their Answer, (meaning that Answer which *Peter* gave, &c.) tho they be whipped or killed for their Labour. And *Dr. Fulk* allows the Note, but yet would not have the Papists to have any benefit by it, (so partial are Men, when uppermost.) We see then, by consent of Christians generally, the Voice of God must be obeyed in Things religious, tho the Princes of the Earth say Nay. And to this agrees the holy Psalmist, *Psal. 119. 23.* *Princes sate and spake against me;* that is, they sat on the Throne, and decreed Things against him: *But thy Servant did meditate in thy Statutes.* He would not depart from the Ways of God, tho he was persecuted. *Psal. 119. 161.* *Princes persecuted me without a cause, but my Heart standeth in awe of thy Word.*

But here it may be fit to obviate an Objection.

It will be said, *Tho it is true, that all that fear God, are bound thus to obey God, and not Man, in Matters of Religion, and to suffer patiently, rather than to sin;* yet whether in Things indifferent, which

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are neither commanded nor forbidden ; if Princes here make use of their Authority, Christians are not bound to obey actively ? As for Example, about the Place of Worship, &c.

To this it may be answered ; Seeing God has forbidden no Place, if that were all the Business, he were a mad Man that would not actually obey ; and consequently he is bound to obey Authority in every Case that is like it ; as thus : It is a Duty for a Nation, in a time of common Calamity, to humble themselves by Fasting and Prayer ; and doubtless 'tis best this be done at the same time, and none so fit to order this as the Magistrate : If therefore Authority command the tenth, twentieth, or thirtieth Day of such a Month, for such a Service, I doubt not but he should be guilty of Sin, that should in this refuse such Time, meerly because it is appointed by the Magistrate's Authority. And if there be an hundred Cases of this kind, the same Answer must be given in them all, for ought I see ; or else under pretence of fearing God, we shall dishonour the King, which is a Sin of an high Nature.

Tho Christians be Subjects to Princes, yet Princes are Subjects to God, and in the Sphere where God has set them, can do nothing more pleasing to him, than to promote the Interest of Religion, by discountenancing Prophaneness and Irreligion, and by giving Encouragement to the Lovers of it. But then as they are Subjects to Christ, they are Fellow-Servants with their Subjects, (yea, the Angels think not themselves too high to be called so, *Rev. 19. 10.*) and therefore must with their Subjects be obedient to *one Lawgiver*, even Jesus, and not assume Power to make Laws for the Consciences of Men in Religion, nor to force them to go beyond their Knowledg and Faith in Things of that kind, *seeing what is not of Faith is Sin, and we must every one give an Account of himself unto God.*

5. The last Particular I shall insist upon, as necessary to the true Fear of God, is to avoid Covetousness and Worldly-mindedness. Covetousness is said to be Idolatry. And he that is a covetous Person, makes little further use of Religion, than to be a Cloak for his Iniquity ; he fears not God, he serves not the Lord Christ, but his own Belly ; for this he preaches, for this he prays, and without this he will do neither. These are the Men that make Merchandize of the Word of God, *supposing* (as the Apostle saith) *that Gain is Godliness.* I meet with a notable Passage in
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our English Chronicles ; in the sixth Century, 'tis said, *The Clergy of Britain set all their Mind to serve God, and not the World, the Heart, and not the Belly : Wherefore then were they had in great Reverence and Honour. But as they encreased in earthly Treasure, so they decreased in heavenly Treasure.* Fab. Chron. 5 part. cap. 134. Let all that fear God, beware of this evil Disease, especially such as are Ministers of Christ. *No Man can serve two Masters ; ye cannot serve God and Mammon,* saith our Saviour, *Mat. 6. 24.*

Thus much of the Fear of God ; let us now consider the Debt which we owe to our King.

Honour the King.

Altho by the Order of our Text, we are to speak of this weighty Subject in the last place, yet it is not the least part of our Duty : For as the ancient Christians were wont to speak, so it remains an eternal Truth, *That as God is above the Emperor, so none other is above the Emperor but God.* And consequently our Duty, next to Almighty God, is to our Prince ; as we see here in our Text, the Honour of the King is provided for, next to the Fear of God. We have already shewed, in the opening of the Words, that the King here meant, or immediately spoken of, was an Heathen King, and a great Idolater in his Religion ; and yet the Holy-Ghost does here oblige all Christians, even of the highest Rank, to honour such Kings, *Peter* himself, and consequently all his Successors not excepted ; for indeed he had learned this Obedience of one higher than himself, even *Jesus Christ*, and therefore must needs recommend the same to all Christians. And hence the Doctrine is,

Doct. IV. *All Christians are bound by Gospel-Rules to be good Subjects to Princes, to honour their Persons, and conscientiously to obey their Authority.*

1. To evince this great Truth, it may be needful to shew, *That Kingly Power or Government is of God.* Not in the Sence (prophanely objected by some Writers) wherein Plagues, Diseases, and Punishments are of God ; for the Apostle *Paul* doth expressly contradict such an ungodly Exposition, *Rom. 13. 1, &c.* wherein he

avers, even of the same Kingly Power spoken of by Peter, *That it was ordained of God*; that the Magistrate was *God's Minister* to the Christian Man, (as well as any other) *for Good, to execute Wrath upon him that does Evil.* Which Word, *Minister*, refers evidently to him that bears the Sword of Justice, and not to the Power only, which yet he affirms to be of God, and confirms it by this Argument, *For there is no Power but of God; the Powers that be, are ordained of God.* And this is the only comfortable Ground of Obedience to the higher Powers, to be well satisfied in this, that whether it fall out our Obedience shall be active or passive, yet therein we conform our selves to the Will of God, or to his Ordinance; *And he that shall resist the Power, does resist the Ordinance of God.*

2. That Kingly Government is of God as clearly, if not more clearly than any other Form of Government, is very plain from the Text it self, considered with the Context, *vers. 13, 14. Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as supreme, or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent by him, &c.* Where Supremacy over all Persons in Things Civil, is so clearly given to the King by God himself, even over Governours, as well as the People governed, that it must in no wise be denied. /

3. If it be objected, that tho the Power Magistratical be of God, yet the Form or Mode of it is of Man, because (according to the Greek) *1 Pet. 2. 13.* may be read thus, *Submit your selves to every humane Creature.* To this I say; The Words, *Humane Creature*, are better understood of the Laws made by Humane Authority, than of the Magistrates themselves: For as the most high God, and he only, can give Being and Power to a Divine Law, insomuch that no Power on Earth can create such a Law; so Earthly Gods, and none but they, can create and give Power to an humane Law; and Laws thus made, are rightly called *Humane Creatures*, or Ordinances of Men, (as our English expresses it.) And when Laws are thus made, tho they should happen to be ill Laws, (as it sometimes happens to be so) yet they must be obeyed, (either actively or passively) because the Power Magistratical must not be resisted; only the Error of an ill Law must be refused by all faithful Men, especially in Matters of Religion, as we have shewed before.

4. This great Power which God hath given to Kings and Rulers of the Earth, to make Laws, is (as I conceive) the chief cause why they are called Gods, Psal. 82. 6. *I have said ye are Gods, and all of you are Children of the most High*: That is, because of that resemblance which they have to God himself, being decked with Power and Majesty, to make and execute Laws (in this lower World) which concern the Children of Men as such.

5. And as to the Form of Kingly Government (for this is all that I can find in my Text): Let us hear what God himself saith. *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice; by me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.* What can be said more in this case? If any shall say, 'tis not God, but Wisdom that speaks these Words, Prov. 8. 15, 16. I answer, it is Folly that makes the Objection, for this Wisdom is the Voice of God, because it is the Wisdom of God. Kings are called *the Lords Anointed*. And not only the Kings of *Israel*, but even Heathen Kings also. *Isa. 45. 1. Thus saith the Lord to his Anointed, even to Cyrus.* Now *Cyrus* was King of *Persia*, *Ezra. 1. 1.*

6. If yet it be said, that Government, but not the Form of Government, is of God, but of human Choice, &c. I answer, I speak not of a Government to be formed, and not yet in being; but of one established: and therefore, I say, the distinction is dangerous. But how shall it be a Power or Government without its Form? Does God make an Ordinance or any thing else without Form? If so, what can you call it? It is the Form that gives every thing to be, or at least to be called what it is. It's bad venturing to say, that God makes an Ordinance, and leaves Man to form it, as to the Essentials of it. And seeing no Nation can long endure, without Government, nor that Government subsist without Form. It seems necessary that both be acknowledged to be of God; and consequently, where the Form of Government is Regal or Kingly, it is of God, and as such to be had in Honour.

That God does by his Providence order and permit Men to transact, order, and settle the Mode of Government, in Nations which yet are unsettled in that respect, does not prove that the Form or Settlement when made is not of God, or not to be esteemed so; because in such an emergency, the Voice of the People, together with God's Providence, must herein be acknowledged the Voice of God. For thus in an ordinary way is that Saying true,
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By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth. It was the most high God which gave *Nebuchadnezzar* a Kingdom, Majesty, Glory and Honour, *Dan. 5. 18.* who then may question his Regal Power to be of God? It's ill murmuring, worse disputing, worst of all to fight against God. Surely, if *Nebuchadnezzar* must have this Honour given to him as King, even by *Daniel* that Servant of God, because by the Almighty he was thus exalted, altho otherwise he was a sinful Man, a great Idolater; it must needs resolve all doubts that may arise, about the warrantableness of Kingly Government, and all Christians Obedience to it, with respect to all Kings under whom they live, whatsoever.

If it be objected, that some may usurp Kingly Government, and some that have it may abuse it.

I answer; Tho this be true, yet it is nothing to the purpose; for this is incident to all other Forms of Government. And when God permits such things, it's usually for the Sins of the People, as it is written, *For the Transgressions of a Land, many are the Princes thereof, Prov. 28. 2. He gave them a King in his Wrath:* But this was because *Israel* had rejected God, and his Prophet *Samuel*. Otherwise God had promised to give his People a King, *Numb. 23. 21.* Yea, the Government of *Moses* himself was after a sort a Regal or Kingly Government, *Deut. 33. 4, 5.* If then it so fall out, that Kings or other Rulers do oppress their Subjects, I know no remedy for the Subject but Prayers and Tears, that God would turn their own Hearts more to his Fear, and the Heart of their Prince towards them; (*For the Hearts of Kings are in his Hands:*) And with patient Suffering, and humble Supplication, to seek for Favour. For Rebellion must by no means be admitted, *For it is as the Sin of Witchcraft;* being against God, as well as against the King, because it is against the Ordinance of God. And hence *Tertullian* well said, *The Christian knows that the Emperor is constituted of God.* And saith the Prophet, *I have delivered all these Countries into the Hands of Nebuchadnezzar:* Who then may take them out of his Hand? Sure none but God, who sets up one, and puts down another, as pleases him. For he that gives can only rightfully take away, and he doth so when Men abuse what he gives. *Mene, Mene, Tekel Upharsin, God hath numbred thy Kingdom, and finished it, — and given it to the Medes and Persians, Dan. 5. 25, 26.*

If it be objected from that Passage, *They have set up Kings, and not by me*; that Kingly Government is of Man, not of God.

I answer; This rather proves the contrary, for here a disorder only is reprov'd in the way of doing that, which they could not do rightly but by him, that is, God. They so set up a King, as *they rejected God, that he should not reign over them*, 1 Sam. 8.7. Hence it was that Samuel gave them that Reproof and Exhortation, 1 Sam. 12. 20. *Ye have done all this Wickedness, yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your Heart.* But God did not deny them a King: No, but he had given them direction how to chuse them a King, Deut. 17. 14, 15, 16. And most certain it is, that of all Civil Governments which God hath set up in the World, Kingly Government is the most frequent, and permanent, so far as the Scripture gives any account of this Matter: And indeed it holds the nearest resemblance to that Government which God himself exercises over the World in general; For he is King of Kings, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.

Let us then come more directly to the Text, *Honour the King.* And,

1. Of the Honour which we owe to his Royal Person. *We must esteem it very highly*, and behave our selves towards him with that Fear and Reverence which belongs to him, as placed next unto God. *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King*, Prov. 24. 21. *Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's.* So the Text, *Fear God, Honour the King.* We see the King holdeth the next place of Honour unto God. Hence Tertulian, personating the Christians of his time, says, *We honour the Emperour as a Man next unto God.* And saith Optatus, *Above the Emperour there is none but God, who made the Emperour.* If we will honour the King's Person, or esteem him highly, we must not only upon all fit occasions, give him (with Reverence) his Place and Titles of Honour; but also defend his Person with the hazard of our own, as those did who would not suffer King David to hazard himself, saying, *Thou art worth ten thousand of us.* Let us hate to think or speak evil or contemptuously of him whom God hath exalted, and set over us.

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We find a remarkable Instance of true Love and Loyalty to a Prince, 2 Sam. 15. 19, 20, 21. Here tho *Ittai* was willed by the King, not to put himself in danger for him, yet he answers thus, *As the Lord liveth, and as my Lord the King liveth, surely in what place my Lord the King shall be, whether in Death, or in Life, even there also will thy Servant be.* This poor exiled Stranger (for such he was) shall rise up in Judgment against many native Subjects, who have done quite contrary hereunto even in our days.

2. *We must Honour him in Love.* Sincere Love, and Loyal Affection, as he is King, can in no wise be wanting in a good Subject: Nor can we honour the King heartily, if we do not love him entirely. Now he that truly loves his Prince, has him much in his serious Thoughts, especially when he prays to the God of Heaven: He will not then forget him whom he truly Loves, whom he honours in Love. If he love him, he will pray for him; perhaps that is all the good he can do his Prince; and in this a mean Subject may serve his King, as much as any, so that his Prayer be Serious and Godly. It is highly observable, how the duty of making Prayer for all Men, and particularly for Kings and Rulers, with Supplication, Intercession, and giving of Thanks, is required of Christians; especially of those in the Ministry: That by the Ministers constant and devout performance of this Duty in behalf of all that are in Authority, the Hearts of the People may be more endeared towards their Prince, and themselves hereby instructed to perform their Duty, and manifest their Love to their Governours in like manner, 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. And to enforce the Exhortation to this Duty, the Apostle tells us, that it is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, *vers.* 3.

3. The next Demonstration of honouring the King, shall be taken from the manner of our Language, and the matter of our Discourse when concerned to speak of him, or of his Doings. In these we must hate the thoughts of Scurrility, or reflecting Expressions; for the Tongue is the Index of the Mind, and we are expressly forbidden to curse or speak evil of the King, even in our Bed-Chamber; for these things are so odious, that Providence will fight against such as do so, and the Iniquity of such doings will return upon the Offenders: *For a Bird in the Air shall carry the News, and that which hath Wings shall tell the Tidings,* Eccles. 10. 20. Are they not marked out in Scripture for the worst sort of Men, that are not afraid to speak evil of Dignities? More daring
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and presumptuous than Angels, who are great in Authority, and may lawfully do more than Men, yet they dare not bring a railing Accusation against the Devil, who is the Prince of Darkeness ; but they refer the wrong done to them unto God, who both can and will rebuke him. But why may not the good Angels rebuke Satan ? Why they know (as wicked as he is) he could do nothing about the Body of *Moses*, nor any thing else, without License from the Almighty : He must indeed be withstood in his Temptations, but he must not be rail'd on it seems. And then what manner of Men are they that will take Liberty to rail on their Princes, if they do not what they would have them ? Nay, tho they should do Evil, yet must they in no wise be evil spoken of. *Thou shalt not revile the Gods, nor speak evil of the Ruler of my People*, Exod. 22. 28. Acts 23. 5.

Object. *But have not the Prophets reprov'd Kings when they did Evil ?*

I answer, Yea ; God reprov'd them by his Prophets frequently. And no doubt that Men of God, such as have Commission from him, may and ought to deal faithfully with Kings and Rulers, when they do that which is Evil in the sight of the Lord. But this is that which is intolerable, that the Errors or Infirmities of Princes should be made the Subject of Mens Discourse : Surely they are rather to be lamented before the Lord in secret. *Is it meet to say to a King, Thou art wicked ? and to Princes, Ye are ungodly ?* Job 34. 18. The true Sence of these Interrogatives is, No. It is by no means thus to reflect upon a King. St. Paul having spoken rashly, Acts 23. 5. corrects and excuses himself, by saying, *I wist not, Brethren, that he was God's High Priest : For it is written, Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of my People.* Let Christians beware of this evil Disease which reigns in these days. Let them remember, *They are bound by Gospel-Rules to Honour the King*, next to God himself.

Thus much of the Honour which we owe to the King's Person.

Let us now consider, how we are obliged by Gospel-Rules to obey his Authority. And here,

1. Let the Subject consider how much God has set him below his Prince, for Obedience seldom issues from a lofty Mind. It's not impossible for a Subject, in conceit, to be a Prince's Mate, and

then Subjection is Death to him. That Passage concerning *Mephobsheth*, the Son of *Jonathan*, 2 Sam. 9. 8. was written for our Learning. When he considered the Majesty of King *David*, and his own Condition as a Subject; *What is thy Servant* (saith he) *that thou shouldst look upon such a dead Dog as I am?* Such self-abasing Thoughts in a Subject (especially those of low degree) does argue an Heart full of desires to honour him whom God has exalted as his King, and a Mind willing to obey him. Let Christians learn by this Example.

2. Our Saviour hath led us the right way: *Give unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.* But what things are they? Why the Things which bear his *Image* and *Superscription*. *Whose Image and Superscription is this*, says Christ? They say, *Caesar's.* Therefore, saith Christ, *Give unto Caesar, &c.* We may hence fairly infer, that whatsoever bears the King's Authority, or is required in his name, must be obeyed. *Submit your selves to every Ordinance of Man, for the Lord's sake, whether it be to the King as Supream, or unto Governours, as unto those that are sent by him.* Mark, if they be sent by him, they bear his Image, or Superscription, they represent the King; submit, submit, either Actively or Passively, here's no resisting, for here comes *Caesar*. Only here it must be minded, *Caesar's* Superscription is only to be put to the Ordinances of Man. None can put a Divine Character upon a Law but God; and we must give to God the things which are God's, Divine Obedience, or Obedience in all divine things, to God; Civil Obedience, or Obedience in all civil things, to *Caesar*. Thus has our Saviour divided the matter of Christians (and all Mens) Obedience to God, and to *Caesar*. Let us hold to this most just Settlement, a better cannot possibly be given.

3. St. Paul will have Christians Subjection to *Caesar*, to proceed from them of pure Conscience, or for *Conscience sake*, Rom. 13. *not only Wrath.* And of this Reason wills that we give all the Assurance that we can to Princes, that we are heartily their Subjects; And willingly obedient in all things which concerns their Government over us. This Principle of Obedience in the Heart, will make our Obedience to Princes delightful and durable; they that have this good Principle in them, will never be weary of any reasonable Labour, Service, or Hazard for their King: where it is wanting, the King can put no confidence in them. This is so reasonable, so necessary, that he that hath not such an Heart for his

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Sovereign, is unworthy the name of a Subject : He is no Subject. From this Principle, we are to pay tribute also, *Rom. 13. 6, 7.* and not grudgingly. And when Princes see Men ready, in conscience of their Duty, to serve them as God's Vicegerents ; how naturally will this draw back again the influence of all Princely Favours ? That Prince who is thus happy in the Obedience of his Subjects, will doubtless, as a Loving Father, contrive the best to make his Subjects happy under his Government.

4. How clearly is our Duty to our Superiors delivered by *St. Paul, Tit. 3. 1, &c. Put them in mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magistrates, to be ready to every good work.* Let the Power be in this or the other Form (for all Nations have not the same Form of Government) you must not dispute that, you must cheerfully obey, as becomes Men of a ready Mind, to do the good commanded by Magistrates ; you must not ask whether they be Heathen Kings, or Christian Kings : You must obey all Kings or Magistrates, *For they are God's Ministers, attending on this very thing ;* i.e. the Government of the World : a very necessary thing, without which human Society cannot subsist. Here is no Limitation of time for your Subjection to Princes, Powers, and Magistrates ; you are under this Obligation so long as *St. Paul's* Epistle to *Titus* is Canonical. Let not then any idle Dream of the change of Dispensations subvert you from the simplicity of the Gospel-Rules delivered in this great Case, in which the Happiness of Christian Men, as such, is much concerned : *For, who shall harm them if they be careful Followers of that which is good ?* 1 *Pet. 3. 13.* But if it so fall out, that notwithstanding your care in this matter, ye must suffer for righteousness sake, then happy are ye, &c. for still religious Obedience is due to God, and must be paid to him.

5. This place, *Tit. 3. 1.* commands Christians *to be ready to every good work.* *Obj.* What if the Powers command otherwise ? what then ? For answer to this, we know we have an Obligation to obey God antecedent to that of our Obedience to Kings (as has been shewed.) He commands us to abstain from every appearance of Evil, 1 *Thess. 5. 22.* Wherefore if the Power shall be so unhappy to command otherwise, as it fell out in the case of *Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. 5.* there the Penalty must be patiently endured. And then the Powers are still obeyed. And tho some vainly upbraid us, that there either is no such thing as Passive Obedience ; or that our Obedience in this is like the Obedience of a Felon, when he goes to

the Gallows, &c. Such blind *Byards* may be pleased to know, the Felon hath ordinarily nothing to chuse, but must necessarily dye : whereas the suffering Christian has Life and Liberty offered if he will but worship so, or so. Now here he chuses rather to suffer, than to do that which he conceives (at least) to be sin in the sight of God, that so he may be a faithful Witness for God ; and therein a Blessing to his Prince and to his Nation, which is his only way to silence the Ignorance of foolish Men ; whose unwary Objections reflect not only upon all true Martyrs since the World began, but upon Christ himself, who for this cause was hated and persecuted, because *He bore witness to the Truth*, Joh. 18. 37. and that the *Works of the World were Evil*, John 7. 7.

6. But if it should happen that Princes should some way intrench upon the Civil Rights of their Subjects? What then must we do? What then? Why it is dangerous to contend with them in such cases ; we are taught otherwise by the Example of our Saviour, in his direction to St. Peter, in the case of paying Tribute to the Roman Magistrates, *Mat. 17. 25, 26, 27.* For it is evident from this place, that our Saviour was not obliged by Law to pay Custom or Tribute, but was free in that case ; yet it being demanded, he advises Peter to pay it, both for himself, and his Master : So careful was he to avoid Offences, that he will pay Tribute, and advises his Followers to do it too, tho it be in their own wrong. A good precedent to all Christians to be humble, and not to contend with Authority in or about indifferent things : Would God they would consider it.

7. But it may here be demanded, Whether Princes may not warrantably punish such as submit not to the Religion by them established, from the Example of King *Artaxerxes*, *Ezra. 7. 26.* *Whosoever will not do the Law of thy God, and the Law of the King, let Judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto Death, or to Banishment, or to Confiscation of Goods, or to Imprisonment?*

I confess, this Objection requires a serious Answer. And with submission to better Judgments, I shall say a few Things in Answer to it. And it seems by the Scope and Contexture of the Commission given to *Ezra* by *Artaxerxes*, that these Things are evident :

1. That the King did not himself embrace the Religion of the Jewish Nation, but retained still his former Religion ; for tho he did fear the God of *Israel*, yet he never calls him his God, but the

the God of Heaven, and the God of *Ezra*, &c.

2. That God had by a special Providence, and Motion from himself, disposed the Heart of the King of *Persia*, to give free Liberty to the Jews, which were Captives in his Dominions, to go forth to serve their God ; vers. 13. *I make a Decree, that all they of the People of Israel, and of his Priests and Levites in my Realm, which are minded of their own free Will to go up to Jerusalem, to go with thee, — to do whatsoever shall seem good to them, after the Will of your God.*

3. The King does not only give a present Supply to *Ezra*, as a *Free-Will-Offering* to the God of *Israel*, vers. 15. but also provides for his necessary Supply for the future, *out of the King's Treasury*, vers. 20.

4. The King fearing the Displeasure of the God of *Israel* against himself and his Sons, does require *Ezra*, that *whatsoever was required by the God of Heaven should be diligently done.*

5. The King also empowers *Ezra* to set Magistrates and Judges over the People, and in so doing, gave *Ezra* a Magistratical Power, or made him a Magistrate ; and so gives Order, that whosoever would not be obedient to him should be punished, vers. 25, 26. This is the Sum of the Commission given to *Ezra* by the King of *Persia*.

In all which, nothing appears, that any of his Subjects should be compelled to alter their Religion, nor be forced to be all of one Religion : But a free Liberty is given to the Jews, (as well as to others) to serve their God according to his Law, and a Restraint laid upon them that would hinder them. And *Ezra* is empowered (indeed) to punish those that were under the Law of *Moses*, according to that Law, if they would not do it ; and such as withstood his Authority, as a Magistrate, which he received from the King, were to be punished by the Law of the King of *Persia*, who had the Power of Life and Death in his hand, which the Jewish Nation had not at this time.

6. We may learn hence, that it is indeed a blessed Thing for all Kings to fear the God of Heaven, and to advance the Interest of Religion in their Dominions ; and it is as evident, that Religion must always be settled according to the Law of God, with the greatest Care that may be, and none punished for keeping the Law of God ; but for breaking the Law of God, and the Law of the King, which did concur with the Law of God. Here were great

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Punishments assigned ; and yet not to be insisted on too rashly, in the Times of the Gospel, nor in Cases purely Evangelical, or of the Christian Religion, as it is dignified above the Principles of common Reason and Morality : In these Cases I cannot see how it should be in the power of Magistrates to compell any against their Will, seeing it's God, not Man, that makes Christians. *Ephes. 2. 10. We are his Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them.* And God gives none the Privileges of his Children, until they be his Children ; nor are they his Children, till they be *born, not of Blood, nor of Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.* John 1. 12, 13.

7. Nor must we deny, but acknowledg, that God's Vicegerents are authorized by the Almighty to be Keepers of both Tables, so as to defend his Sovereignty, and to encourage true Religion, against Atheists and Idolaters, that worship a Creature instead of the Creator ; for so it is written, *Job 31. 26, 27, 28. If I beheld the Sun when it shined, or the Moon walking in Brightness, and my Heart hath been secretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kissed my Hand ; this also were an Iniquity to be punished by the Judge, for I should have denied God that is above.*

Now let us write (or desire the Lord to write) the Words of our Text in our Hearts ; *Honour all Men ; Love the Brotherhood ; Fear God ; Honour the King.* Surely that Christian, that shall make it his Business to do these things heartily, *shall be acceptable to God, and approved of Men ; there shall be no occasion of stumbling in him.* But if Christians be too busy to inspect Matters of State, or to meddle with those that contrive or project any thing to the disturbance and subversion of the Government in the Kingdoms where they live, they shall never be able to recommend their Religion (be it never so good in it self) to the acceptance of their Governors, nor to obtain from them to be *Nursing-Fathers* to it ; but shall certainly expose themselves to the Displeasure of God, as well as to the Wrath of Princes. And God himself will vindicate the Honour of his Ordinance of Worldly Government, against all that despise it, as well as against all that abuse their Power in it ; *for there is no Respect of Persons with God.* Rom. 2. 11.

Let me therefore exhort you, my Brethren, (as you know it has been my manner these thirty Years) *to follow Peace with all Men, and Holiness ; to study to be quiet, and especially in troublesome Times ; to fear the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change, Prov. 24. 21.* Many have undone themselves by itching after Changes in Worldly Government. God only knows what is best for you, and for the Nation. They that are weary of this, are soon weary of that ; few know what they would have ; and who is able to devise any thing that will please all Humors, and suit all Interests ? Bless God for your Prince, and for the Peace you have enjoyed under him, and pray for him, and for all that are in Authority, that under them (if the Will of God be so) you may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty. They that will not pray for all that are in Authority, do not fear God, for they condemn his Word, *1 Tim. 2. 1.* They do not love, and so they cannot honour the King.

You are at present under Sufferings, for the conscientious performance of what you believe to be your Duty towards God in Matters of Religion ; humble yourselves under the mighty Hand of God, and suffer patiently what Trials it shall please God to exercise you under, that (as our Apostle hath it, *1 Pet. 1. 7.*) *the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than that of Gold that perisheth, tho it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* I say no more ; the Lord direct you. *A M E N.*

NOW if it shall please God, to bring this faithful (tho unpolished) Discourse to his Majesties Royal Hand, I do hereby in all Humility prostrate my self at his Royal Feet, with this humble Supplication.

That it would graciously please his Majesty, according to his wonted Goodness, and Princely Clemency, to consider and pity the distressed condition of many of his faithful Subjects,

jects, who dissent from the Church of England in the case of Infant-Baptism, and some other Ceremonies, and cannot in Conscience to God conform to them; nor deny the exercise of their Religion, of which they are convinced, and persuaded to be according to the Will of God.

O let our Lord the King consider, that this is the greatest strait that any honest Christian can be put upon, either to deny what he believes to be true, or profess that to be true, which he believes to be otherwise.

O let the God of Heaven be always his Majesties Chief Counsellour; That by his direction he may rightly distinguish between those that are harmless in his Realm, and such as have abused his Kindnesses (which have been very great, and thankfully to be remembred) and that the present Severities against the Innocent may be abated and removed, lest they be made miserable in their Native Countrey.

God Almighty bless the King, &c.

F I N I S.